

REMARKS

By way of the foregoing amendments to the claims, Claims 1-10 have been amended to delete the multiple dependencies and the reference numerals, and to replace the words "characterized in that" with the word "wherein". These changes have been made in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.121 as amended on November 7, 2000. Marked-up versions of Claims 1-10 indicating the changes accompany this Preliminary Amendment.


It is requested that the application be examined on the basis of the substitute specification and the claims as amended.

Early and favorable consideration with respect to this application is respectfully requested.

Should any questions arise in connection with this application, the undersigned respectfully requests that he be contacted at the number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Date: July 18, 2001

10:00 "TUESDAY"

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Marked-up Claims 1-10

1. (Amended) A method of forming and thermosealing one end of a packaging container comprising layers of thermosealable material, the packaging container being displaced by means of a conveyor through a forming station and a sealing station, **[characterized in that]** wherein the conveyor [(8)] displaces the packaging container [(1)] through the forming station [(11)] in contact with mechanical forming devices [(22)] which progressively reform the packaging container end until such time as opposing walls thereof meet one another in a sealing fin [(6)] oriented in the direction of movement of the packaging container, whereafter the conveyor [(8)] further displaces the packaging container end in between sealing devices [(13)] disposed in the sealing station [(12)] which heat thermoplastic material located in the sealing fin [(6)] to sealing temperature, whereafter wall portions included in the sealing fin are mechanically urged against one another during simultaneous cooling and continued advancement.

2. (Amended) The method as claimed in Claim 1, **[characterized in that]** wherein the advancement of the packaging container [(1)] takes place continuously and at uniform speed through the processing stations.

3. (Amended) An apparatus for forming and thermosealing one end of a packaging container [(1)] which is displaced by means of a conveyor [(8)] through a forming station [(11)] and a sealing station [(12)], **[characterized in that]** wherein the forming station [(11)] includes

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a mechanical forming device [(22)] which is disposed along the conveyor [(8)] a distance therefrom, as well as sealing devices [(13)] disposed in the sealing station [(12)], the sealing devices similarly extending along the conveyor [(8)] a distance therefrom and being disposed to heat a sealing region of the packaging container [(1)], and also compression devices [(14)] disposed after the sealing devices and disposed to mechanically compress the heated wall portions so that these, after cooling, are sealed to one another in liquid-tight fashion.

4. (Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 3, **[characterized in that]** wherein the forming device [(22)] includes a folding rail [(23)] extending along the conveyor [(8)], with a work surface [(24)] which, seen in the direction of movement of the conveyor, is commenced in a first orientation and terminated in a second orientation which differs 90° from said first orientation.

5. (Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 4, **[characterized in that]** wherein the first orientation is parallel with the longitudinal axis of a packaging container [(1)] advanced by the conveyor [(8)].

6. (Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 4 [or 5], **[characterized in that]** wherein it includes two folding rails [(23)] provided with counter-facing work surfaces [(24)] which, at their final end, display a mutual interspacing which is equal to or slightly exceeds

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the total thickness of the wall portions included in the sealing fin [(6)] of the packaging container.

7. (Amended) The apparatus as claimed in [any one or more of Claims 3 to 6] Claim 3, [characterized in that] wherein the sealing device [(13)] includes an inductor [(25)] for inducing a heating magnetic field in a layer of conductive material included in the laminate.

8. (Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 7, [characterized in that] wherein an inductor [(25)] is located at each side of the path of movement of an end portion of a packaging container [(1)] advanced by means of the conveyor [(8)].

9. (Amended) The apparatus as claimed in [any one or more of Claims 4 to 8] Claim 4, [characterized in that] wherein a mechanical preforming assembly [(10)] is disposed ahead of the forming device [(22)] seen in the direction of movement of the conveyor.

10. (Amended) The apparatus as claimed in Claim 9, [characterized in that] wherein the preforming assembly [(10)] includes two counter-rotating squeezers [(16)] disposed on either side of the conveyor [(8)] with peripheral mutually facing work surfaces [(21)] which are driven in the direction of movement of the conveyor [(8)] and at the same speed as the conveyor.